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DATE 5/27/95

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Re: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

- - - - -

Deposition of ELIZABETH FORSLING HARRIS, taken at 40 Central Park South, 20th Floor, New York City, New York, at 5:10 p.m., Wednesday, August 16, 1978, before Tinamaria B. Kadelski, Shorthand Reporter for the State of New Jersey.

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APPEARANCES:

LEODIS C. MATTHEWS, ESQ.
Designated Counsel
Select Committee on Assassinations

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E L I Z A B E T H F O R S L I N G H A R R I S, having been duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

MR. MATTHEWS: We are convened here.

Pursuant to House Resolution 222, I am a designated counsel for the Select Committee on Assassinations, to obtain a statement from Ms. Betty Harris.

MS. HARRIS: Elizabeth Forsling Harris is my full name.

MR. MATTHEWS: We are on the -- I don't know where we are.

MS. HARRIS: 40 Central Park South, on the 20th floor.

MR. MATTHEWS: The only persons present besides myself are Ms. Harris and the stenographer.

Ms. Harris, I have to inform you that I am authorized to take this statement, and you have been sworn by an authority who is authorized to administer oaths. You have agreed to give this deposition voluntarily; there has been no subpoena issued.

MS. HARRIS: Correct.

MR. MATTHEWS: And, you understand that you will be given a copy of the transcript to review and make corrections.

MS. HARRIS: I do.

MR. MATTHEWS: Do you request a copy?

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MS. HARRIS: I would like one, yes.

MR. MATTHEWS: What address would you like the copy sent to?

MS. HARRIS: This address. 10019 New York zip code.

MR. MATTHEWS: Ms. Harris, do you understand that the context of the deposition that will be given here today is not to be considered as testimony from the Committee, but it may be used by the Committee or its staff as a basis for questioning witnesses before the Committee, and it may be incorporated as part of the record only when you are unavailable as a witness or the Committee determines that in the interests of justice and economy, with due regard to the importance of presenting oral testimony, the statement should be used?

MS. HARRIS: Yes.

MR. MATTHEWS: I have given you a copy of the Committee Rules dated April the 11th, 1974.

MS. HARRIS: '78.

MR. MATTHEWS: '78, and you have had a chance to read Rule 4?

MS. HARRIS: Yes, I have.

MR. MATTHEWS: And, you understand that you have a right to have counsel present during the course

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of this deposition?

MS. HARRIS: I do.

MR. MATTHEWS: And, is it your desire that you waive the right to have counsel present?

MS. HARRIS: That is my desire.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. MATTHEWS:

Q. Let's start, Ms. Harris, by giving us a very brief resume since 1963 of what you have done.

A. I left Dallas in -- shortly thereafter, shortly after the assassination, early '64, I guess, and worked briefly for the Democrat National Committee -- not briefly; through the Convention of 1964, and thereafter, I went back to the Peace Corps, where I had been employed from the inception -- roughly, the inception of the Peace Corps, up until June of 1963, when I had gone back to Dallas, which is my home. I left the Peace Corps in 1976; subsequently, worked for the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. for one year as a Special Assistant to their Director; then, worked for the Urban Institute in Washington, helped set it up; then, went to California and worked for Psychology Today -- the company publishing the magazine Psychology Today; came back to New York in early 19 -- let's see ... early 1971 to start Ms. Magazine. Since that time, I have done a

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variety of things, including publishing, subsequently, a magazine called Working Women. I basically describe myself as a magazine publisher and am about to do another one, and I have also been very busy in city affairs.

Q. In New York?

A. Yes. Civic jobs, volunteer jobs, and also, doing a lot of political work with the Democrat Party, various aspects of the Party. Is that enough?

Q. What were you doing in 1963?

A. In 1963, I had lived in Dallas, and I left there to go up and work for the Peace Corps and I had gone back to Dallas to go back into business. I had been doing public relations down there before the Peace Corps and I went back and did a little bit of that. I did some work with a man named Sam Bloom, whom -- I will refer to later -- has and had an advertising agency down there that's integrating some of the -- I was doing -- oh, a couple of little things and looking to start a new company, which, because of my decision after the assassination not to stay in Dallas, of course, fell to pieces. But, I was looking to start a company to sell insurance to women.

Q. During the course of November of '63?

A. Yes. I had been doing that during the summer. I came back the end of June, so I was there -- July, August,

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September, and I was prepared to stay in Dallas and to work there, presumably forever, and to stay out of politics because I recognized politics was a sort of snub in Dallas. I had been active in the political situation in Dallas prior to my going to the Peace Corps, working for Johnson and Rayburn and a number of our leaders, and I distinctly didn't want to get involved in politics because tempers ran very high and I was something of a liberal; therefore, had nothing to do with it. I knew that Kennedy was coming to town, but chose not to be involved in the arrangements.

About a week or so before the actual trip, I got a call from Bill Moyers, whom I knew well in Washington.

Q. Before Kennedy's scheduled trip?

A. Yes. Yes. Bill was, at that time, the Department Associate Director of the Peace Corps, but he told me he had been called at the White House by Kennedy to participate in unraveling the political snarl that pertained to the -- Kennedy's planned trip to Texas. He was very quiet about the whole thing, and specifically asked that I not divulge the fact that he was coming to Texas, because he didn't want to upset John Connally.

He came -- he asked me to help him. I said I didn't want to help him; he insisted, and he flew down on a night plane, arriving in Dallas on his way to Austin, arriving

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in Dallas at -- oh, like, six o'clock in the morning, called me at home, said he was going to take a nap at the airport motel, and we met, I think, around 11:30. I had, by that time, knowing he had come, I spent the afternoon and evening before that trying to dig into the -- exactly what the facts were. I had agreed to do that much for him; what the facts were in terms of the delicate situation, because Dallas was causing a great deal of trouble about Kennedy's proposed visits.

I wrote him a long memorandum, which I gave that to him the next morning, and told him I didn't want to have anything more to do with it, here are the facts; go to Austin, and God bless.

He went down to Austin, as you know, and called me back -- as I recall, it was a Thursday -- he called me back on Friday afternoon and said that he had a big problem in Dallas and that I was the only one to help him solve it -- Bill's a very persuasive young man -- and would I please go down and see a man named Sam Bloom, because Bill knew I knew Sam Bloom, because Sam was in charge of the -- sort of the Executive Director, but Sam was the guy working on behalf of what might have been called the Host Committee; what really was the establishment in Dallas, the businessmen who really, at that time, politically, ran the City of

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Dallas, most of whom are opposed to Kennedy's coming.

Sam was refusing --

Q. Would those people have been the political element that supported John Connally?

A. Yes, I would say. John was, then, Governor, as you know, and they were very pro-Connally, and very anti-Kennedy, and very anti-Ralph Yarborough, and they wanted -- the big battle came over who was going to get tickets to the Trade Mart luncheon, and they did not want to give -- they felt they did not want Kennedy to come, because they were hoping he would be defeated in the next election, and they didn't want to put on a big show for him; they didn't want to do anything to help Yarborough, and they felt that it was their town, and when the President came, he would do as they wanted him to do, and therefore, they would dole out the tickets as they saw fit.

Well, what was happening, there was this tremendous scream coming from the Yarborough -- the liberals who were saying, "We are being cut off" and of course, right in the middle of all this was Johnson, who was also Vice President.

So -- so, Sam Bloom was leading the Dallas group -- I mean, he was speaking for them; he wasn't making decisions. He had long done that for that group. He had long served in his behind-the-scenes executive capacity for -- I think it

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was called the Dallas Citizens' Council or something like that. It was a group that met -- many of the leading businessmen whom I knew well, many of them. But, they pretty much decided what was going to happen politically in Dallas, and Sam was their loyal, capable worker. He had his own advertising agency, which is now a very large and successful agency. But, in any event, because I knew Sam well and because Sam was a little bit put out because there had been so many people coming down from Washington telling him what to do, that he didn't want to have anything to do with this kid named Moyers coming from -- from Austin. The guy who had originally come was Jerry Bruno, and Jerry Bruno had a way of throwing his weight around. Then, Bruno had disappeared. Then, they sent down Puterbaugh -- Jack, and Jack was from the Department of Agriculture, and he didn't know anything either.

Q. Why did they send him down?

A. I have no idea why they found him.

Q. Was he a Texan?

A. No, he didn't know -- he certainly knew nothing about the political situation, and he didn't know a great deal about advancing the trip. But -- so, this further angered Sam, and by the time Moyers came along, I think Sam was abrupt with him. But, anyhow, I said -- that's how I

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got involved in this. Bill said, "You got to go down and talk to Sam Bloom for me." Well, I reluctantly agreed to go, and from that moment on, I was deeply involved in all their arrangements, until the following Friday, because I did know Sam, and therefore, what I had not wanted to do, i.e., be involved, and I spent the full seven days working full time on the arrangements from there on in.

So, that's how I got involved in this whole thing.

Q. When you wrote the memoranda to Bill Moyers, did you do any research? Did you talk to any people?

A. Yes, I had spent -- he had told me the day before I had about twenty-four hours,that he definitely was coming, and so, I undertook to go out that afternoon and evening and get on the telephone and find out what the political situation was. I knew a lot of people in Dallas, and I sat down and did a research report on who was fighting who and who was mad at who, and who wanted to do it this way and who was objecting to that, etc.

Q. When you talked with Bill Moyers on the phone, did he express a knowledge of that; the people, the facts?

A. Well, Bill understood Texas politics in a general way.

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Q. In a general way?

A. And, Bill's a very bright person, and he had a general idea of what the problem was. He did not know the specifics because he never really lived in Dallas. And so, what I had done was to do just a thorough research, telling him who the people were, what they did, and defining the basic problem, and the basic problem was, very simply, that the conservative Democrats, who were the City Fathers, didn't want to do anything for the liberal Democrats, who were then led by Ralph Yarborough as the incumbent Senator, and the two groups were fighting over the distribution of tickets; less important was the -- less open fighting about the amount of publicity that was going to be given to the -- the liberals wanted some publicity to turn out the crowds. They wanted big crowds for political reasons. They wanted it to look like Kennedy was terribly popular in Dallas, and the conservatives wanted a poor crowd, because that would look like he wasn't very popular in Dallas.

So, there was some arguments going on between how much stuff would be in the papers. The papers were pretty well controlled by the Sam Bloom group, and the liberals were screaming and yelling that there wasn't enough publicity; they wanted more.

Q. Why did the conservatives and the liberals

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understand that Kennedy came to Dallas in the first place -- was planning to come --

A. As I recall the reason -- it was purely political. Everybody understood that it was a political trip to shore up what, at that point in time, looked like a decline in the President's popularity. It always happens, but after about two years in office, a President always sinks down to his bottom of the polls. Texas was very touchy on the subject of Kennedy because, really, Texas and Illinois carried the country for Kennedy, if you go back and look at the elections in '60 and '61, and that is another story. But, the conservatives wanted to show that in spite of the fact that Texas, by the slimmest of margins, had gone for Kennedy in '60, that he was no longer popular. The liberals, on the other hand, wanted to show that he was too popular, and it's as simple as that.

Q. Did you understand that John Connally -- or, who was then Governor Connally, invited the President to come to Texas?

A. No, I had not understood that.

Q. Okay.

A. I did not understand that it was an open invitation to say, "Come down". I understood that John had reluctantly acquiesed.

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Q. So, you got involved with the political groups about ten days before the scheduled trip was planned to Dallas?

A. Yes. It was actually -- actually about eight days -- eight days, because I think Bill came down Thursday morning -- that would be Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday -- count the days.

Q. And, one of the things that you remember that was most significant was the fighting about who was going to get tickets to the Trade Mart.

A. That and the publication of the route.

Q. When did that happen?

A. Well, let's see...that was happening -- that was one of the things Bill wanted me to get into by Monday or Tuesday of the following week. We had a confrontation meeting with -- John was there, as I recall.

Q. Governor Connally?

A. Yes, and Bob Strauss, and the guy I was working with most closely was the Secret Service man named Winston Lawson -- yeah -- and, he of course was totally neutral. But, I do remember a meeting that took place with me on one side of the table and John and -- I think and Bob Strauss and Sam Bloom on the other, arguing over the route, arguing over publication of the route and publicity attended to the

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whole thing, because they distinctly wanted to keep it very quiet. Bloom had arranged not to have the route published in the papers. I blew my stack at that. I said, "I don't care what you guys think." These are all my friends, understand, although we were at opposite sides of the table. I was very sincere and open on this thing, and I said, "This is the President of the United States, and this City -- I don't care whether you like him or not. He's the only President we got", and finally, I think, my pressure was responsible, which I had cause to have regret about, was the forced publication of that route. They were not going to publish it until Friday morning.

So, Sam finally decided to publish it.

Q. When was it published?

A. Either Wednesday or Thursday. It was published ahead of time. I wanted it published ahead of time because that helps get the crowd out.

I can go into all the efforts that we made -- what's the word I want? -- protection security. That's a different subject.

Q. I would like to discuss that eventually, but let's talk about the route selection itself.

Was there any division about which way Kennedy would take to get to the Trade Mart?

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A. Yes, initially. You are familar with the layout in -- the airports here, Love Field; the Trade Mart, roughly, is here, and downtown Dallas is here. The idea of the optimum was they wanted to bring him from Love Field directly to the Trade Mart, which is an area that goes past a very little populated area.

Q. Would that have been down Heinz Boulevard?

A. Straight down Heinz, and you missed, therefore, all this residential area, and the Dallas business district, if you come that way. Do you follow me?

Q. Yes.

A. So, there was much back and forth and much conversation, not just with me, but with people in Washington and with Moyers, etc., to -- instead of coming from Point 1 to Point 2, to come all the way through Maple Avenue, around -- down Acreage Street, then, hit Main Street, go back under the viaduct, and then, out.

Q. In other words, go downtown?

A. To go through the populated area -- if they had come directly from Love Field to the Trade Mart.

Q. Via Heinz Boulevard.

A. There would have been relatively few people who would have seen the President because people won't go that far. The idea was to turn out as many crowds as possible,

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and we were afraid people wouldn't bother to drive; whereas, if we brought him down Main Street, right down through downtown Dallas, approximately -- shortly after noontime, then we get the lunch-time crowd. We get all the people coming out of the office buildings, etc. We also get all of the people -- we came through a rather heavy residential section and, indeed, we did, and we were arguing about those two strategies.

Q. How emphatically did Connally insist on using the Heinz Boulevard route?

A. Well, not totally emphatically, because, obviously, it was decided to go this way. But, there was an awful lot of discussion and an awful lot of short tempers before it was finally, reluctantly determined that they would bring them around the long route. But, beginning -- I have to emphasize that this was political horseplay; it was not -- I mean, it was -- at least I never determined, obviously, any other reasons why they would object: 'My side's bigger than your side' was the argument.

Q. Did they understand that your side, representing the President, certainly was much bigger than the other side, representing the State's political level?

A. Not down in Texas; we weren't in Texas. We were

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distinctly the minority. I was working for Moyers, and he was working for the White House, and so -- and quite clearly, Bill and I understood each other completely. We wanted a big turnout for Kennedy, and it was up to me to express as firm a position as I could in all of these meetings on behalf of what the White House wanted, and as I said, the White House was doing some of its own talking, and Moyers was doing his own talking, and I was the sort of point man on the front, and between all of us, it was finally agreed that he would come the long way around.

Q. Do you know when that was decided; how many days in advance?

A. We were arguing that as late as Tuesday.

Q. Which would have been --

A. Before the Friday of the trip, and it was finally determined that they would -- indeed, when I came on board, which would have been the Friday before, they were still not entirely sure that it was going to be at the Trade Mart. But, that decision was finally agreed to over the weekend. Then, we had the big hassle over the route, as I remember all this, and you must remember this was fifteen years ago, but -- and finally, determined that, and then we got into the argument over the publication of the route.

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Q. Were you involved in deciding whether or not the luncheon site was going to be at the Trade Mart? That was decided before you actually got involved?

A. Yes.

Q. Who was representing the White House at those discussions?

A. Puterbaugh, myself and Win Lawson.

Q. But, his position --

A. And Moyers by telephone, and through Moyers, Frank Erwin,and I don't know where Erwin came. I never met Frank Erwin. He was in Austin this whole time. But, he was obviously being touched base with, and he was in touch with Connally; and Strauss, who lived in Dallas, was sort of Connally's man in town on this thing, and Bob dealt with the -- the guy who was -- I can't remember his name. He was the then-President of Tom Thumb Stores or some -- something. He was the guy who was the chief spokesman for the City and to whom Sam Bloom was immediately accountable.

Q. What were the considerations about using the Trade Mart? The Women's Building was discussed at the fairgrounds, if you remember.

A. I don't really remember a great deal about that. There was some discussion about general convenience for everybody concerned, and some discussion about the fact

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that in order to get to the fairgrounds, it was the farthest away from Love Field. You have to remember that there was a time factor, because Kennedy was on a very tight -- the Kennedy party was on a very tight timetable. They left Fort Worth, came over to Dallas; were to do Dallas quickly, and have lunch there, and then get to Austin, where there was going to be a big dinner in the State Capitol. So, that the matter of how much time was going to be spent in moving the motorcade from the airport to whatever point the luncheon was going to be held in Dallas, and then, getting the motorcade back to the airport to get the plane out of -- to get to Austin on time, came into play, and partly, I think -- as I recall the reason that was made to have it at the Trade Mart instead of the Women's Building at the fairgrounds was that it would take much less time to get -- after the lunch, to get from the luncheon back to the airport, than if they go clear over across town at the State fairgrounds. It would have taken -- to get the motorcade from the Women's Building back would have probably taken a good forty-five minutes time; whereas, it was six, seven minutes from the Trade Mart. So, I think that had a hand in it. There was some argument by some people over the fact that it should be in the Women's Building because that was a State-owned facility; whereas, the Dallas Trade

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Mart was a privately-owned facility.

Q. What about the people who would come?

A. Well, there was also another reason that was raised at one point, which was -- going back to the ticket distribution -- was that, if it were in the Trade Mart, it was a privately funded -- it was private, a private location, and therefore, the conservative element would have greater control over the tickets than if it were in a public facility, where they would have to give tickets to those 'Yarborough types'.

So that, in a sense, the decision to make it go to the Trade Mart was a political victory for the conservatives.

Q. Now, John Connally was there in Texas. Did anybody represent Yarborough?

A. No. I got stuck with that, finally, at the last.

Q. That is a matter of equity.

A. Oh, yeah, and I knew Ralph, and I had been -- there was a man in Dallas, whose name I cannot remember at the moment, whom I knew quite well, who was a lawyer and who was always regarded as Yarborough's Dallas man. You may run across his name; I would recognize it if you told me. But, a very nice guy, slight man, about sixty, I guess, sixty-five, slender, sandy-haired, freckled face, bespeckled

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guy, who was Yarborough's man, and he and I had several conversations, and he was in somewhat -- and he was, mostly, groveling for tickets, and I, through Moyers, did finally get some tickets.

Q. Now, tickets to the luncheon, or tickets to the fundraiser?

A. Tickets to the luncheon.

Q. Okay.

A. Which I then doled out to the proper so-called 'liberal types'.

Q. Now, before the final decision was made to publicize the route, did you confer with anyone in the White House?

A. I talked to Moyers about it, and --

Q. What was his position?

A. Well, he and I were furious because we wanted the publicity, and I talked to Moyers, I would suspect, about every two hours; for those whole seven days, we were constantly on the phone to each other, and, with Bill's encouragement, that I made a lot of noise about -- to Bloom -- demanding that the route be run, and it finally was -- I think the Times Herald ran it first, and I have a vague feeling that the Times Herald ran it on -- they ran it on Wednesday afternoon's edition, and the news ran it the next

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morning, on Thursday morning, as opposed to the original plan, which had been to only hold it for the news on Friday morning, which would have held down the crowd.

Q. Now, Win Lawson was the person representing the Secret Service. What role did he play?

A. Win was down there -- he was, I guess you would say, as I understood it, his job was to check out all of the details and to liaise with the local police department and also, beyond that, to make sure that all of the arrangements were as his superiors in Washington wanted to have them. So that, he didn't get too much into the political aspect of all this. All he wanted -- he was a nuts and bolts man, and he worked very closely with Jesse Curry, who was the Police Chief.

Q. Was Win Lawson in on the discussions about the timing of the publicity and the route selection?

A. I can't recall his being part of the in on the publicity, about the publication of the route. He was, of course, concerned about the route selection because of, (a) the time factor, and (b) to a lesser extent, the security factor, and it would have meant an even bigger security job to -- to get Kennedy all the way over to the Women's Building.

Q. Did those things come up in the discussions you held with the Connally people?

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A. Yes. We had this -- I was constantly in touch with Sam Bloom, who I, for the purposes of -- I would regard as a Connally person, and then, as I said, we had this one meeting at the Republic National Bank Building. I know Bob Strauss was there. He had been my lawyer and good friend, and I think John was there, as I recall, and this would have been either Monday or Tuesday of that week, and it's where we got down to a bit of name calling on the subject of both the route, the publication, the ticket distribution, the whole thing.

Q. How seriously were the protective elements discussed, the security of the President? Did anyone think that was a topic to be considered?

A. Yes, there was a great deal of discussion about it. The thing we were all afraid of, at that point -- certainly, Kennedy types, like myself, we were very concerned over the radical conservative element. You remember General Walker, who had been fired on, and we knew that there were a lot of what I would call conservative kooks, or -- and, we were very concerned that they were going -- everybody was, including Bloom, and I -- everybody was concerned that some nut was going to get a gun and take a shot at the President. So, a great deal of time and effort was spent, particularly, by Lawson, with the police, and it was always my understanding

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that they had located most of the known troublemakers, the unhinged conservative types that might pick up a gun and do something, and they were under house arrest or surveillance the day Kennedy arrived. In other words, the police knew who some of these people were, and they told them to stay in their houses, and put a policeman there to watch -- I don't know.

The other thing was that Bloom decided that they wanted to park what I call a Black Maria -- one of those police vans where they pick up prisoners -- conspicuously along the route, particularly wherever the motorcade turned outside of the Trade Mart, and other such places, because we were afraid that there might be some demonstrations, and they were prepared to put these police vans out there and to pick up -- to serve as a deterent, but if necessary, to pick up the wilder demonstrators if indeed that was to be. I objected vehemently to that because I said, "This is the President, and some of us will be on television, and you can't -- in Dallas, Texas, you can't make it look like -- that the President of the United States can't come down without resembling a Police State", and they finally decided not to put those very obvious black vans out at all, these individuals, where they would be picked up by the television camera there. Again, my consideration was --

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I mean, I thought they were just gilding a lily. I was all for keeping these conservatives under surveillance, but I thought that was carrying it a bit too far, and I finally won that.

Q. Did you also have firm in your mind that Ambassador Stevenson had been insulted just some short weeks before?

A. Yes. He had been spat upon. He had been at the -- what they call the Convention Center, the Colliseum, that new building. Yes, I was aware of that. We knew that. Again, however, we put the onus on the radical conservative element, of which there were -- you've got to remember, you are young, both of you. You got to remember that in 1963, it was very hard for anybody to recognize that anything worse than a spitting incident would occur. I was extremely anxious and Moyers and I frequently discussed this. We wanted to bend over backwards to avoid another Stevenson episode because it had gotten tremendous publicity, and we felt it would be not at all in the interests -- in Kennedy's interests for a thing like that to happen. Except for the kooks that might go out with a gun, I can't say that it ever occurred to any of us that there was -- that there would be -- that death would occur. We were worried more about appearances.

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Q. Well, you knew that General Walker had insisted the attempt on his life had been an assassination attempt.

A. Yes, yes. We knew that he said that.

Q. Did you have an understanding that that may have been the kook who attempted to shoot him?

A. Yes, yes. I mean, obviously, it's an unstable person who would attempt to assassinate anybody; whereas, General Walker had made himself undesirable to certain elements in Dallas. We did know that he had been shot at, and he considered it an assassination attempt. But, we once again assumed that this was a disgruntled member of his own group, as one does in a situation like that, yes. We knew that, and we were, as I said, Lawson and I were very well aware of it because I saw Lawson quite often and we worked late, and I met some of the other Secret Service people who eventually arrived, but I knew that he was working with Curry on getting a fix on the known troublemakers.

Q. Did you ever have any contact with any city other than Dallas in the arrangements you were making?

A. No, except through Bill. I mean, I would hear through Bill. Bill was really pivotable, and was very pleased that I was somewhat interested, but really, only tangibly in the Fort Worth arrangements, because my respon-

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sibilities picked up as soon as they left Fort Worth, and therefore, it was of concern to me when they were going to leave Fort Worth and what the travel schedule was, and I remember Bill had worked very hard to set up a labor meeting in the parking lot, and the last conversation I had with Bill was that he was so pleased that it had worked out so well, right on time, and that Kennedy was coming into town on schedule, and so on and so forth. But, aside -- as far as making any of the arrangements, no, I had nothing to do with those.

Q. Do you remember any conversations from that time about Governor Connally requesting that T.C.U., or Texas Christian University, extend the doctorate degree to President Kennedy?

A. No, I don't.

Q. What about Kenny O'Donnell? Did you ever have correspondence with him?

A. No. After, in the hospital room.

Q. Where were you about noon?

A. My place at noon was out at the airport with everybody, and I was out in the tarmac waiting for the plane to come in, and go over -- first thing I said was -- the Johnson plane came in ahead of the Kennedy plane, so I went over and walked and labored the Johnsons around and met them

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and walked over to where they were to line up to greet the Kennedys when they came down the steps, when their plane landed. Then, I went back over, too, and stood with the man who -- I think it was -- he was Forrest somebody.

Q. Sorrells?

A. Was he F.B.I. or Secret Service?

Q. Secret Service.

A. And, it was at that point that we decided to take the bubble off the car because Bill had been on the phone saying Kennedy doesn't want a bubble, and the Secret Service people said they wanted a bubble on because there was going to be rain, and Bill's last word to me was, "Get that God-damned bubble off unless it's pouring rain." Well, I stood out there, after getting Johnson settled --

Q. At Love Field?

A. -- at Love Field, looked over there, and the sun was coming out, and I said to Sorrells, "Let's tell them to take the bubble off," which they did, and then I stood there marshalling various people to get in the right cars, and so on and so forth, and I had a bus where I was to take the senior staff. We were travelling with both the President and Vice President, and that bus -- I was supposed to swing it in -- I wasn't driving it -- but, swing it in behind the Secret Service car, behind Johnson's, and as I

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got everybody loaded and got there a little bit too late, and as a consequence, all of the Congressional Delegation that was accompanying Kennedy got in their car, got in ahead of us, and I had with me -- we had Lincoln, Mrs. Kennedy's two women, Liz Carpenter from Johnson's staff, several other people whose names I don't remember, couple of local people, and we then got the bus into the motorcade, and went off toward the Trade Mart.

So, the only thing that's relevant about that, as we -- when we got down to starting to go under, to make that right turn by the -- then, left turn by the book depository, I saw -- I was aware that something had happened because they had speeded up, and I remember saying to Lincoln -- she noticed it, too, and I said, "Don't worry", then when we pulled past the now famous Grassy Knoll, and I saw people running and people running, and I realized that something had happened, but still, not exactly precisely.

Q. Had you heard any shots?

A. No, we were too far back. That was the point of the thing; we were, I guess, four or five cars behind the President's car -- six cars, so that it was just enough so that we were far enough back. The first I realized there was anything the matter was when I saw a rather fat, corpulent

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police captain running, and it occurred to me that police captains don't run unless something's gone wrong. But, I kept it to myself, and then, because we had local identification and Win Lawson did not have his at the airport, and he said, "Give me your local thing; you won't need it" and I gave it to him. When we got to the back door of the Trade Mart, I was going to bring the staff in the back door for the purposes of speed, they wouldn't let us in because I didn't have my little local identification, and I -- while we were standing there arguing with the policeman, somebody rushed up and said, "The President's been shot," and I then called, immediately, the newspaper --

Q. Which newspaper?

A. Dallas News, and was confirmed that he was shot.

Q. That was -- you called the newspaper?

A. I called to find out -- this guy had rushed in very upset, as anybody was, "The President's been shot, the President's been shot", and it, obviously, threw this little group into a tizzy, and before we did anything, I felt I had to confirm it, and I called the paper, when it was confirmed.

Sort of in a daze, I went out and commandeered a State Trooper's car and he took us to the hospital, and that was why about five of us got there very quickly; Jack

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Valenti, the three Kennedy women, and myself, and Liz Carpenter. Then, of course, by that time, we knew indeed it was true.

Q. When you saw Mrs. Kennedy in the hospital, where was she?

A. You know, it was a T-shaped room, and there were two or three little rooms along here; two rooms where they had Kennedy and Connally, and she was seated right here in front of them, kind of in the middle of the floor.

Q. Outside of the room?

A. Outside of the room, in a very traumatized state.

Q. In the chair or on the floor?

A. In the chair, where she sat almost the entire time except for when she went in there to see him -- the ring business and everything, very shaken and covered with his brains and blood, and Dave Powers would come over occasionally and squeeze her shoulder. She didn't even recognize Rick Gallagher, Mary Gallagher, Pamela Turnure, her own staff people, and she was just, you know, almost out of it, understandably so, as was everybody in the place.

Q. When you were in the motorcade, and before you reached Houston Street, do you remember the motorcade stopping at all?

A. Well, you have got to remember we were in a big

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bus, and buses -- and we were elated, all of us, with the huge crowds as we came down Main Street, and we moved down Main Street, we kind of -- the bus driver would move a little bit, and he would almost stop and shift gears and move on, just because of the slow pace of the motorcade and the difficulty of moving one of those great big buses. We -- I do remember kind of coming to a stop almost to the place just before we made the turn, which was the point where Evelyn Lincoln said, "What's happened? They have gone ahead of us" and I looked and I could see the President's car moving very rapidly, and we did sort of stop at that point; I mean, we did entirely stop, actually, and he was making that sharp turn, but I assumed that was simply because they were trying to make up time, because we were late, according to our schedule, because we had run into many more crowds. I forgot what the exact times were, but we had a time figured out, and we were behind, and I just assumed that they were speeding it up now because they passed the area where there was lots of people lining the street.

Q. Did you see anyone standing in the road on Elm Street?

A. Elm? I have been saying Elm?

Q. You came down Main.

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A. Turn onto Houston and then onto Elm, that's right. Did I see anybody standing in the street? Yes. By that time, I remember seeing somebody picking themself up off of the sidewalk. They had been -- like, they had thrown themselves down on the -- face down. I saw that police captain running.

Q. Which direction was he running?

A. He was running toward what is now known as the Grassy Knoll. I saw another policeman who had turned over his motorbike who was picking it up to move on up someplace, and I realized something had happened, but I must say that I did not -- I supposed maybe somebody had fired a shot or something, but it never occurred that the President had been hit very clearly. I don't know how to describe this, but after those few seconds, you could tell that there was something that had disrupted the crowd, and I remembered afterwards that I realized that something had happened, but -- and, I was sitting on the left hand side of the bus, so that the -- that area just below -- below -- to see the book depository, etc., I had to look across the bus, but I remember the fact that something had upset the crowd.

Q. Did you actually ever get in the Trade Mart Building itself?

A. No. No. Because when I found out -- when I was

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able to ascertain that the President had been shot, I knew a lot of those people, but a lot of those people on the City Desk at the Dallas News knew my name. So, when I told them -- when I was -- they told me the President had been shot, and taken to Parkland. So, we turned, immediately went out and found this police car with a policeman who was parked there. He had been planning to do something -- it was a State Trooper's car, and he took us to the hospital. Otherwise, we would have never gotten to the hospital, because he turned on his siren.

Q. Miss Harris, you were in Dallas -- well, you mentioned for some time in '63, and you were familar with at least, generally, most of the political factions.

Did you have any understanding of the left wing type of politics in Dallas?

A. When you say "left wing", can you define your term a little more?

Q. Did you have any understanding of the Cubans and their participation, if any, in Dallas politics?

A. No, I did not. I did not know of any Cubans who were involved at all. I knew George DeMohrenschildt, D-E-M-O-H-R-E-N-S-C-H-I-L-D-T. I knew George DeMohrenschildt and his wife, slightly.

Q. How is it that you know him?

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A. Well, for a while, I lived at a place called the Maple Terrace Apartments, which had a swimming pool that was available to the tenants as well as to some people who had bought a club membership in it, and they did, and I knew them through a little, tiny bit socially, and had had one or two political discussions with him, and regarded him as a kind of interesting but wild Russian, who had some wild political ideas. But, that was -- of the people that were subsequently involved on that side of the fence, he was the only one I had known. I had never known, as I said, any Cubans, and I knew that there were some -- not only knew that there were some; I knew some of the very liberals, that they were all local Dallasites.

Q. Did you know any followers of George DeMohrenschildt? Who some of his close associates were?

A. No. He was kind of a mystery man.

Q. Did you understand his background?

A. Not very much. We knew that he was Russian. We knew that his wife was a second or third wife, and that he was a Russian businessman, or a man with Russian extractions, doing some business in Dallas, and was "interesting", but I didn't know anything about his background.

Q. Was there a prominent Russian community?

A. No.

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Q. So, he was considered as sort of a -- well, oddity, if you will.

A. Yes. Clearly, he wasn't a native Texan, but an interestingly enough fellow. His wife probably attracted the greatest attention because she was not terribly slender, but she wore -- in those days, something that raised quite an eyebrow; she wore a bikini, and she was well padded, and that raised a lot of eyebrows. They were friends of -- there was a Polish community there, a small Polish community there. They were friends. There was Le Ville Varsovie, and the man and his wife that ran that were Polish. She had been a Polish actress -- damn, I can't think of their names. I can find them for you. And, I knew them quite well -- Stan. His first name was Stan. I will think of his last name in a minute. And, they hired ex-Poles and ex-East Europeans. If there were any East Europeans, which DeMohrenschildt was one, they kind of gathered behind that group. Le Ville Varsovie at the time was the best restaurant in Dallas. Slawic, S-L-A-W-I-C, was their name, and they knew the DeMohrenschildts. So that there was really a Polish community to which East Europeans came. But, it was certainly not a Russian community.

Q. Did you know William McKenzie, an attorney in Dallas?

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A. No.

Q. Were you familar with the corporation known as Great Southwest Corporation?

A. I certainly was.

Q. What was your familarity with that corporation?

A. Angus Wynne.

Q. When?

A. I have known several of the people that started Great Southwest Corporation. I knew them, I knew what they were doing. I was familar with the Six Flags. I was with Six Flags. Now, let me come to this. There was a guy named Wes; he was a New Yorker who moved down there, who was, then, a lawyer.

Q. His last name was West?

A. His first name was Wes. I knew him quite well. I don't know why you asked me this, but let me tell you how this figured into this whole thing.

He was an associate of Wynne's and indeed was responsible at that time -- and of the lawyer's point of view -- was pretty much responsible for the Six Flags -- The Inn of the Six Flags.

A few days after the assassination, he called me because he knew I had been involved in this whole thing,

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to say that he was very, very concerned over what was happening over the Inn of the Six Flags because the F.B.I. had brought out Marina Oswald --

Q. Was that his words?

A. Yes. Yes -- no , he asked me to come out to Arlington for lunch, which I did, to the Inn, and told me that they brought her out here, was very critical of the way in which they had transported her, attracting a great deal of attention along the way. They put her in a car and they had two or three cars and apparently -- I'm quoting him now -- the F.B.I. had guns and they had waved them, and they had actually been seen by the people on the highway leading out there, and he felt that -- he was very critical of the F.B.I.; they put her in one of the rooms at the Inn of the Six Flags and had her under guard. He was very concerned about the way the F.B.I. was comporting themselves.

Q. Did he understand that it was the F.B.I. or the Secret Service?

A. He understood it was the F.B.I. I was sufficiently concerned because I had every reason to respect him. He wasn't a troublemaker, he wasn't a publicity seeker. He was a good, solid guy. I called Washington on this, and as I recall, I spoke to Bill Moyers and Abe Foyers. Abe was a very close friend of mine, and as you know, is very close

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to Johnson, and Abe, Bill and I had many conversations the first two or three days after the assassination when things literally, totally, had fallen apart. Anyhow -- and, I reported this and said I was very concerned because the town was very nervous and Wes was a very reasonable guy, and I don't know what Bill did with the invitation. He sort of laughed at me, Abe did, and said, "Well, now you know the truth about the F.B.I. which is typical --" or "Whoever said the F.B.I. knew what they were doing?" And I heard nothing more about it ever again. But, I did sort of wonder about that because Wes was not the kind of person who would have made this up. He was concerned over the fact that the F.B.I. was going out of the way to attract attention to this woman, who they were hiding out for their own protection. So, that is the only way that the Great Southwest and Angus Wynne, as far as I am concerned, came into this.

Q. Now, Mr. Wynne was very displeased about the fact that the Inn of the Six Flags was used.

A. I didn't talk to Angus about it. The guy's name -- I can't recall his associate. His first name was Wes -- Wesley. It was he -- I did not talk to Angus Wynne. He was speaking for, I guess, the company.

Q. Is that what you understood he was speaking

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for the company?

A. Yes.

Q. Why was it that he was talking to you?

A. Because he knew me, because he knew we were social friends. Again -- he knew my political interests, he knew that I had been involved in the arrangements before the assassination, and he also knew that, I guess, after the -- on Saturday morning, a few of us pulled ourselves together because we thought the town had gone literally bonkers. There were about ten of us. A guy named Ray Nasher, the Dean of the S.M.U. Law School, a minister named Luther Holcomb, two or three other people -- I can't remember all of them, and we waited for Stanley Markus to come back -- he had not been in town -- to try and bring what we thought was some sense to the city in terms -- and to the leaders, in terms of its response to this terrible tragedy that had taken place, and Wes knew that I was part of that group, which is why he called me.

Q. Who was the person you were waiting for?

A. I was waiting for, where?

Q. That the group was waiting for?

A. Stanley Markus.

Q. Who was, at that point, President?

A. Chairman of Neiman-Markus, which is, I guess, the

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most celebrated store in Dallas. But, in any event, Stanley was a -- and I guess still is regarded as a liberal leader in Dallas and a man who sometimes spoke in the higher circles which would be the liberal political point of view. We all, also, knew, but not that well, that they were taking much too much -- Stanley had been a leader for many, many years in shaping the image of Dallas through not only the store, but what he stood for, and so on and so forth. He was highly respected. We felt that -- this group felt that Dallas's reputation was being even further -- as a city -- even further diminished by the kind of self-protective attitude of the people who were the leaders, who were complaining that it wasn't Dallas's fault, and were saying some things -- you have got to remember the World Press moved in on Dallas and were saying things that we thought were damaging both to the city's reputation and to the Kennedy reputation and to the Democrat Party's reputation. But, we all felt that we had to wait and discuss this with Stanley before we did anything, and we asked him and he went, ultimately, to Eric Jonsson to try to get them to cool it a little. I don't think he succeeded very well, but that's why we were waiting for Stanley, and we -- at that point, it was a pitifully small group of people who were leaders in the community who were willing to take what might be called the pro-Kennedy

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side of this whole thing, such was the -- among the leadership, such was the shock and guilt and whatever else you want to call it of the Citizens' Council and the group that had indeed been running the event.

(A brief recess was taken.)

Q. What was the name of the person who told you this story you related off the record?

A. The man who told me the story is the man named Maurice Levy, called Moe Levy by everybody who knew him, who was a stinker for NBC television news.

Q. Where is he now?

A. He is dead.

Q. He --

A. He died three or four years ago of natural causes.

Q. When did he talk with you?

A. I had been -- I knew him. He, of course, having been covering the Kennedy trip, and a day or two afterwards, -- probably the following Monday or Tuesday after the assassination, Moe told me the following story, which was that Jack Ruby, whom the world then knew, but who none of us -- Moe had known -- had, on Friday, done what he always did, was to place an ad in the Dallas News for his place called -- a strip tease joint called the Theatre Lounge.

Inevitably, Ruby was in the habit of being late;

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so late that the guy who accepted the ads from him just held the space for him, and when he wandered in late on Friday afternoon, he put the ad in for the Sunday paper.

On November 22nd, and very uncharacteristically, Ruby was right on time. The deadline was noon, and Ruby was there at noon. The fellow who took the ad, according to the story Moe told me, had gone out to lunch. Accordingly, Ruby left the ad, and instead of leaving the News Building, which would have been his normal procedures, since there wasn't any reason for his staying there, he went over to a window in an office in the Ad Department, which looked out over Dealey Plaza, and had a very clear view of the book depository, and he sat there and watched, looked out the window -- there wasn't anybody really to talk to, I guess -- until the President's car passed, at which point he got up and left, and I remember very distinctly Moe telling me this story and saying, "Why is it? What does that mean?" And I have never seen that story printed. I have never heard an account of it since then. But, it should be relatively easy to check with. I have always wondered if you can find the guy.

Q. When he told you the office -- in the story, the thing was, he left before the shots rang out.

A. The story was told that he left "when Kennedy's

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car passed the book depository," meaning, when he was shot, without saying anything to anybody because you could not hear it that far across. He then turned and left. Somebody heard the story afterwards and told it to Moe, and I have often wondered since then what that meant, and why it has never been checked out, if indeed it's true, and I have no reason to doubt Levy.

Q. We have a practice on the Committee whereas after we have taken the deposition of a witness, if the witness then wishes to give a fuller explanation of something that we have discussed, or make a statement that may not concern what we have discussed, we will allow five minutes or so to do that.

Do you want to take a moment to think about it? Go ahead.

A. I don't know. I have no theory on the cause of the Kennedy assassination. I am not one of those who has worked out as I have just told you. I recounted my participation in this. I have often wondered about a lot of things. I wondered why the Warren Commission was not a more thorough investigation. I have always felt that the shock that I saw registered on the faces of the Johnsons and the other people who were most prominent, aside from the Kennedys, was one that would -- a most genuine and

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horrified response. I have always been satisfied that under normal conditions, for a Presidential trip -- and this was not the first one on which I had worked -- and I was familar that all due precautions were taken, and I go back to what I said about the effort to apprehend all of the known conservative troublemakers -- known troublemakers, I should say, of any political strife, but particularly, conservative.

But, the only thing I can say is that -- in thinking about it -- is that I thought about it many, many, many, many times. I have realized that the opportunity for some kind of a plan to have been in operation was there, and none of us who were immediately concerned with it would have had any reason whatsoever to have any indication that this was being done, that -- what I am saying is that all of the people who did the work, particularly the security people who did it -- their thorough job, their plan, they did it according to -- ironically, knowing they would have done their jobs well, to plan to assassinate a President if they wanted to by counting on the fact that the people were doing the jobs they were supposed to. And, beyond that, I do subscribe to the theory that the political atmosphere in Dallas was such that it would prove a comforting and encouraging atmosphere for the likes of a man like Lee Harvey Oswald. But, as I

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say, I can see very clearly where it would have been possible to involve him and others in the conspiracy. But, where none of us, who were working very closely on the details on the trip, would have ever had any indication that such was going on.

It doesn't add up to very much, but that's it.

Q. I have not got a firm explanation of what was happening with the Communist Party in Texas and the reaction of the Texas people and politicians toward what had happened with the Bay of Pigs and what had happened with the Missle Crisis and the allegations that Kennedy was turning the country over to the Communists, and I would like to hear about that.

A. First of all, to understand the context to which I am going to reply to your question, I am now fifty-six years old, and I have lived through this, World War II, the whole Cold War era, which we were very much in in '63, actually, and the Rosenbergs' trial, the fear of Communism in this country.

I had moved to Texas in 1953, coming from New York. I had grown up as a liberal Democrat. I was aware that the Communist Party was a very small party. Communism was a busy word for anything that didn't agree with the "American Way." I was egotistical enough to regard myself as a

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sophisticate in political matters; therefore, when I moved to Texas, which was an ultra-conservative town, I was amused at the really rampant fear of Communism; Communism being this ogre, this thing on the part of otherwise very successful and presumably well educated people, and I almost immediately became allied with the liberal Deomcrats in Texas, and if you were a liberal, you were also likely to be a pinko --

Q. What's a "pinko"?

A. That's the euphamism for Communist or somebody leaning towards Communism. The fear of Communism that was evident in a very busy, growing city, called Dallas, Texas was, when I first got down there, I thought, was kind of humorous -- the city.

In 1955, I had been asked to take the then-Chairman of the Democrat National Committee, a man called Paul Butler, on an eleven-city tour through Texas, and the Governor of the State -- at that time, the Democrat Governor of the State would not shake hands with the Chairman of the Democrat National Committee because he was a pinko.

Q. Governor Shivers?

A. Yes, Alan Shivers. Johnson and Rayburn were the two political leaders in Texas, and Rayburn took liberal, and Johnson played it cool and didn't get involved in

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State affairs, and had very little, if anything, to do with Paul's trip through there. All of this -- and the liberals were a very distinctly political group, which I mentioned earlier, were distinctly the minority in Texas, and we were often accused of having Communist leanings. I was not now and never have been and neither were those other people, but if you believe in what we call today sort-of common social justice, you were very suspect, and my whole attitude was always a humorous one, mixed with certain flashes of anger when they were picking on me.

But, Dallas was known as the conservative leadership in Texas, and was the center of the conservative leadership, It was a beautiful town, and people were very busy making money and thriving and so, that -- and the liberal element in Texas and in Dallas went through the same tortures in every election, and until Ralph Yarborough finally got elected as Senator, we haven't had anybody whom we could point to as a liberal person, and Yarborough himself is frequently tarred with the Communist brush, so that it would not be unkind to Dallas to say that they -- the great majority -- that the people saw a Communist under every bed. I mean, anything you did that was not State's Rights, ultra-conservative, that involved itself with any of the minorities -- you didn't call them minorities

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in those days, unfortunately, or that -- it was Communist or pinko, which was the -- so that whether or not -- this was one of the reasons I had stuck my neck out as a liberal and had done a lot of political work. So, this is the main reason, when I came back to Texas, I decided I was going to swallow my political interests and not become involved because I knew in Dallas you didn't get ahead in the business world, you didn't make money, you didn't succeed if you were a liberal. It was just not the way to live happily and prosperously in Texas.

This gets into why this was such a big political to-do.

Q. Kennedy was regarded as a pinko or a Communist.

A. But, anybody who had any interest in what might be called social equality, or would be called the government serving the needs of all the people, etc., was, ipso facto, a Commie.

Kennedy had been, as I said, had carried -- carried Texas, not Dallas, by the slenderest of margins, not because there were that many people that thought that he was not a liberal, etc., but because of the famous Bruce Alger spitting incident in the sixties. Anyhow -- and, Johnson went from there, through the three or four days remaining of the

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Campaign, and talked about, "It's terrible; a man can't walk his lady across the street without being spat upon," and this angered the people that the scales were tipped slightly.

Q. It angered the people in Texas that there were people that would do that?

A. And thus, Kennedy barely carried the State and barely carried -- having anything to do with Illinois.

By the time I went back to Texas, I decided I was going to get out of this business altogether, to get along with my conservative friends, and then, when I got catapulted into working on this trip, particularly to represent the liberals who had no representation in the city at all on this little group that was running the Kennedy affair, I was reminded all over again that (a) I was an outsider, I was a female, and people kind of liked me, but that Kennedy was, in spite of the stand that he had taken on the Bay of Pigs and the fact that he had stood off the presumed invasion of the Russians into Cuba, etc., had -- I do not think it would be fair to say that that earned him a complete turnaround position in Texas. The general, average Texan that I knew, or certainly, Dallasites, felt very strongly that he was a pinko President. This is why it was so terribly important to the Democrats that Kennedy

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come to Texas and make a good showing, to prove two years after his inauguration -- not quite two years -- no, it was a little over two years -- let's see... he was -- '61 -- how many months? A thousand days after his inauguration, that he had not lost political support, but he had actually gained it, and this was the real substance of the fight because the conservatives, most of whom are really Republicans, the Republican Party didn't amount to a tinker's damn, and they really preferred the Republican way of life, and this is why it was such a bitter contest. They did not want Kennedy to come to Texas, much less to Dallas, which was the city of the conservative strength and the city with its bible, the Dallas Morning News; they did not want Kennedy to have a good showing in Dallas, and this is what a great deal of the fight was, and they wanted the liberals kept out of the Trade Mart. Their attitude was that if he was coming to their city, they were their hosts and they would have the people coming to the luncheon who they wanted to come.

Meantime, Yarborough, who was regarded by a lot of people in Texas as the "Emblem of Communism," -- this word that most people didn't understand, they didn't know what they were talking about; but, this was the euphamism-- was regarded as the enemy, and that's why this trip had so much

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importance. And, of course, Ralph misplacing himself, wouldn't ride in the car with Johnson; wanted only to be with Kennedy, etc. But, out of all that froth and the whole, total, complete lack of understanding about the threat of Communism -- I can remember having fights about the floride problem, you know; putting floride in water, that this was a Communist effort to control the minds of the Americans, and you could find any kind of way-out conservative attitude you wanted to in Texas, and as a liberal, you had to love it for other reasons. But, the business community in Dallas was ultimately conservative, and as I said, this is the real source of -- it's all the trouble that provoked the Kennedy trip. That's why we wanted him to come down there to cool things off a little bit, and also, to prove that he was popular. It's the reason why we didn't look for Communist troublemakers. If you really -- once in a while, we were looking for the conservative in the city, the ultra-conservatives who would, maybe, take a shot at a President, and it never occurred to us -- never occurred to me, I should say. But, I never heard any serious discussion about it with anybody that it could possibly be a Communist plot. Even after -- immediately after the assassination, nobody ever said, "Those Commies have got him." We wondered what Lee Harvey Oswald's connection was with the

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ultra-conservatives. That's how deep it was.

Only much later, when the Cuban stuff began to come out, and all the Mark Lanes and all the other people began to expostulate these theories, and it was discovered that Oswald had been in Russia, and that sort of thing. Then, people began to adapt to it. But, immediately before and immediately after the assassination, there was never ever even any wild notion that it would be a so-called Communist or "liberal" or a kind of provoking that might have accounted for Kennedy's death. It had to be the conservative, which is the whole problem -- it's one of the society's great problems in this country, the way we sort of follow whatever is the popular thought at the time, and even those of us who think we knew it all and very seldom do, and because of the news, because of the Dallas News -- and if you haven't ever done it, you should go back and read some of the editorials a few weeks before that, etc. -- it was about as right a newspaper as you can get to the right, speaking politically, and angrily sometimes, to the right, and you always read the Dallas News. But, you always wished you had another newspaper to read, and that is why everybody assumed -- and that is what Dallas was trying to fight off, was that it was these conservatives and this whole conservative atmosphere that made it possible for

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Kennedy to be killed in Dallas.

But, as far as -- it would be stretching the truth a little bit, and I say this just to kind of indicate what I am talking about. But, the attitude would have been that a Commie had been killed by the conservatives, was the first reaction. Do you follow me?

Q. Yes.

A. Then, it was the irony of the worst order, in some respects, to discover that it was this fellow, Oswald, who had indeed been in Russia and had a Russian wife, and then, ultimately, he was mixed up with the Cubans.

Q. Did you think that the DeMohrenschildts knew Oswald or Lee Oswald?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Did you ever talk with him about that?

A. I had, at that time, a fairly new ex-husband in Dallas, who was a native Dallasite, and our relations, being fairly recent, of course, were not very good. He knew DeMohrenschildt better than I did, and I remember hearing -- one does reach conclusions soon thereafter -- as soon as Marina Oswald got out and came back to town, that he was entertaining both Marina Oswald and DeMohrenschildt which immediately, early on, before I left Dallas to go back to Washington, indicated -- I don't know that that's true --

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and that he had known Marina Oswald through the DeMohrenschildts.

Q. But, you have never really understood that directly from him, that he knew her?

A. No. And, I -- other than -- DeMohrenschildt stood out like a sore thumb in a community like Dallas. They were -- well, they just literally -- it would be very hard on the one hand, and very easy on the other hand, for a guy to get away with stuff like that. This is what I said when I realized -- so often, if you are a conspirator, how easy it is to take -- to move within any situation when you know pretty well how people are going to react normally. Do you follow me?

Q. And, you gave the example of the Secret Service.

A. I have worked very closely -- Secret Service had nothing to do with these arrangements. I never even saw the F.B.I. I knew that Win Lawson was talking with them but ...

I would just like to say one other thing. But, it is possible that there is some things that might fit into your investigation that I know, but I don't recognize it. If you ever see this thing, and you see that there is some questions you should have asked me --

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Q. Should I feel free to call you?

A. Please feel free to call me. Do you understand what I am saying?

Q. Yes, I understand.

A. You know the whole story; I do not. You know much more detail than I do. If you see what happened here -- please don't hesitate to get in contact with me.

Q. Yes, I will do that.

We have covered a lot of different areas, and I will read it in the context of my knowledge of other information, and if there is any question, I will feel comfortable to pick up the phone --

A. Yes, anything I can do to help. It was a great tragedy for all of us.

(Closed at 6:45 p.m.)

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PER P.L. 102-526 (JFK ACT)

October 25, 1978

MEMORANDUM

SUMMARY OF DEPOSITION

~~HSCA~~ 013152

TO: G. Robert Blakey, Chief Counsel

FROM: Leodis C. Matthews, Senior Staff Counsel

RE: Summary - Deposition of Elizabeth Forsling Harris August 16, 1978 - New York, New York - JFK Task Force - Counsel: Leodis Matthews

During the first week in November, 1963, Ms. Harris received a phone call from Bill Moyers. He told her the White House had requested that he participate in unraveling the political snarl involved in JFK's pending visit to Texas. Jerry Bruno had been pulled out as the advance man and Bill Moyers became a presidential assistant. Pg. 6. Ms. Harris prepared a synopsis of the political climate and atmosphere toward JFK, and gave it to Moyers. Pg. 10. At Moyers' persuasion she became involved in attempting to coordinate the Dallas reception. Pg. 8.

She described the most significant areas of controversy as occuring over regulating entry to the luncheon site, the Trade Mart and the publication of the route. Pg. 13-14. Sam Bloom, owner of a local advertising firm, had been given the responsibility to publicize the event. He did not plan to publicize the route of the motorcade until the morning of the event. Pg. 14. Ms. Harris protested strenuously and in her own words, "I blew my stack" and finally the route was published on the Wednesday before the Friday motorcade. Pg. 14. She felt that the route would not be published because the scheme was to have the President visit at the luncheon with a select group and then depart from Dallas. Pg. 16-17. The trip would deliberately be kept very quiet. Pg. 14.

The argument surrounding the motorcade route likewise was the people, she characterized as representing the conservative elements, wanting not to push for the maximum public exposure for JFK. Pg. 14, 15, 16. She and Bill Moyers were finally able to get the motorcade route through downtown and into the well-populated areas. Pg. 17-18. The Conservatives wanted the President to take the Expressway directly to the luncheon site and back.

When she became involved in working on behalf of JFK, the luncheon site--the Dallas Trade Mart--had already been selected. She recalled that Winston Lawson, Advance for Secret Service, was present at some of the meetings, and occasionally mentioned security standards. Pg. 22. Most

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of his time was spent with Jesse Curry, Chief of the Dallas Police Department. There was a great deal of discussion about the security of the President. Pg. 23. They were all aware of the Stevenson incident a few weeks before and "everyone was concerned that some nut was going to get a gun and take a shot at the President." Ibid. Sam Bloom wanted to park police vans every few blocks of the parade route to prevent possible trouble. Pg. 24. This was ruled out when Ms. Harris argued to do so would make Dallas look like a "police state." Pg. 24.

She was the person who made the final decision to remove the bubble top from the President's limosine. Pg. 28. At the time of the assassination she was in a large bus with other government officials and did not hear the shots, although she knew something was wrong when they went through Dealey Plaza. P. 29. They went to the Trade Mart and later went to Parkland Hospital.

She stated that while involved in Dallas society she met George DeMohrenschildt, because he and his wife would swim at the Maple Terrace Apartments which had a pool available for those with membership. She had had one or two political discussions with him and regarded him as a kind of interesting, but wild Russian, who had wild political ideas. Pg. 35.

She first became aware that Marina Oswald was at the Inn of the Six Flags when a lawyer for Angus Wynn called and discussed with her how Marina Oswald was staying at the Inn under heavy guard. Pg. 37-38. Ms. Harris explained the dynamics of Texas politics and why JFK was not popular in Texas. Pg. 50-54.

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